



# **LGBTQ+ Back-To-Basics**

**Inclusive Curriculum, Inclusive Community:  
Best Practices Towards Building an LGBTQ+  
Affirming Learning Experience**

Proudly presented by OSSE and facilitated by Diana Bruce, Advocate  
for Thriving Students.



## Hello, I'm Diana.

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Diana Bruce (she/her) is a nationally recognized leader who works at the intersection of health and education equity. She advises schools and youth-serving organizations on coronavirus (COVID-19), transgender accommodations, bias reduction, sex education and school-based health care, and brings her clients 25+ years experience and expertise in the field. Proud parent of two young adults who graduated from DC Public Schools (DCPS) and a DC public charter school.

# Group Agreements

Be present

Provide grace and space to yourself and others

Practice active listening

Ensure full confidentiality

4. Ask, that is how we all learn

# Session Evaluation

Please complete the Session Evaluation at the end of the course.  
- via QR code or the link in the chat.

Session Evaluation is required to receive certificate of completion  
for this session.

# Learning Objectives

- Explain the impact of inclusive curricula and extracurricular experiences.
- Select District of Columbia learning standards they can use to advance LGBTQ+ experiences in their curriculum.
- Prepare to help students create and sustain a Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) student club.
- Develop strategies to increase inclusivity in the classroom and at school.

# Agenda

- Impact of Inclusivity
- DC's Inclusive Learning Standards
- GSAs and Extracurricular Activities
- Inclusion Strategies
- Thank you!
- Session Evaluation

# Think About...

When did you see one or more of your identities reflected back to you in curriculum growing up? Was it someone in history? A special guest? Something else? How did it make you feel?



# Impact of Inclusivity

*Impact Inside and Outside the Classroom*



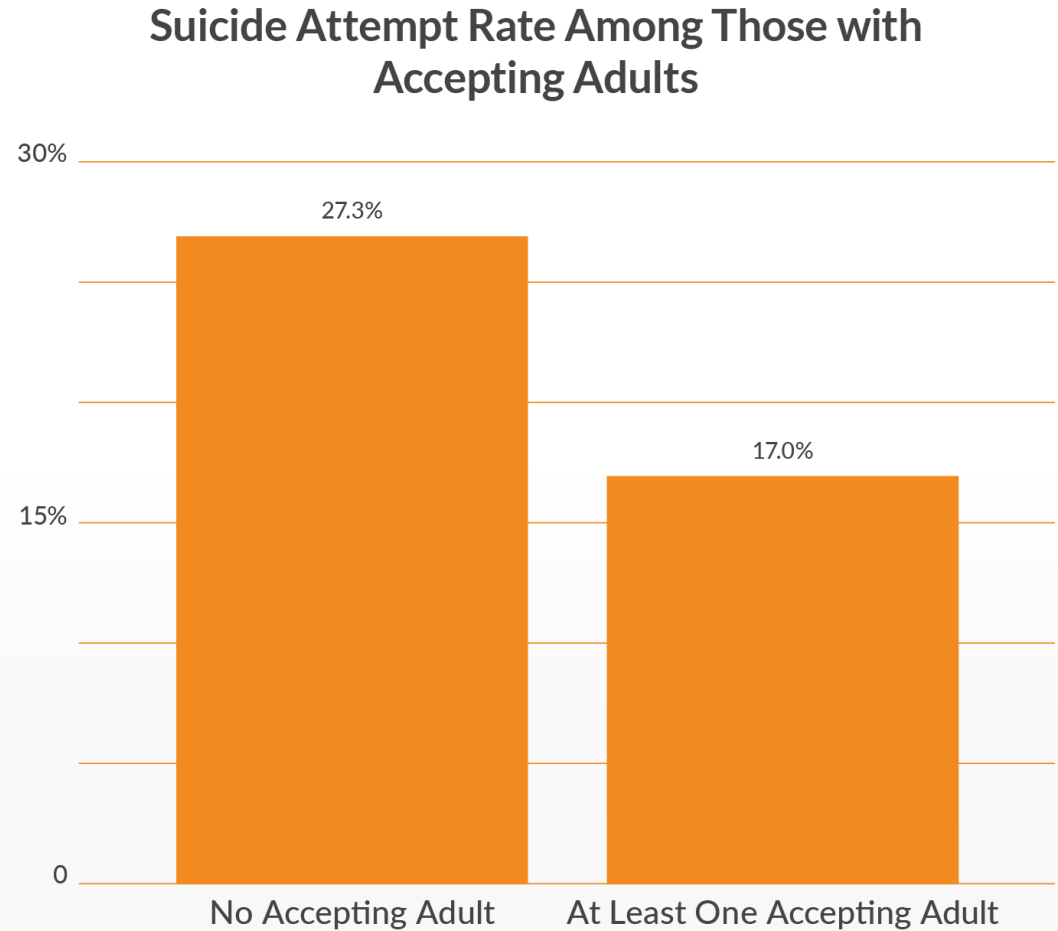
# The “Why” Behind an Inclusive Community

- LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to experience bullying, harassment, severe symptoms of anxiety and depression, and exhibit suicidal behaviors as compared to their peers.
- 45 percent of LGBTQ+ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year.
- Affirming environments can greatly reduce the risk of suicide and other severe mental health symptoms
- Affirming environments can include school, home, after-school program, sports team, library, rec center, etc.

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/>

# What Can Make a Difference

- Accepting adults can significantly reduce the risk of suicide for LGBTQ+ youth.
- These adults can be parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, coaches, etc.



# The Role of Allyship

- An ally is a partner in empowerment who speak out against injustice and support marginalized groups and individuals on their own terms.
- Being an ally means recognizing oppression broadly and standing in solidarity with anyone who experiences oppression—whether or not the ally also belongs to a targeted group.
- Allyship requires commitment. Accept the responsibility to focus unwaveringly on how power and privilege function in the school environment and beyond.

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/summer-2016/anatomy-of-an-ally#:~:text=Allyship%20Requires%20Commitment&text=Whether%20advocating%20for%20marginalized%20students,the%20school%20environment%20and%20beyond.>

# Setting the Tone

- Post pictures of allyship on your door and/or within your classroom space.
- Communicate that you are a safe space for all students by being clear in your expectations and expansive in how you talk about people.
- Communicate to all students that you do not tolerate harassment about race, gender, sexuality, disability or any trait that is personal.
- “Not in my classroom” can go a long way.

# Communicating Effectively

- Harassment does not go away on its own. Model for your students how you want them to treat each other.
- Silence teaches everyone that the behavior can continue, and the targets will not be protected.
- Students pay attention to what we don't say as much as what we do say. Mostly, they watch what we do.

# Shutting Down Derogatory Language

- The Human Rights Campaign recommends keeping it simple with quick responses that clarify your position and expectation.
  - “It is never OK to say, ‘you act like a girl (or look like a boy)’ as a put-down.”
  - “Remember, we don’t use put-downs in this class.”
  - “You may not have meant to be hurtful, but when you use the word ‘gay’ to mean something is bad or stupid, it is hurtful.”  
Follow-up: “Do you know why it is hurtful?”
  - “Using the word ‘homo’ to tease someone is harassment and is unacceptable.”

<https://welcomingschools.org/resources/stop-thats-so-gay-anti-lgbtq-comments>

# Think About...

What could you say if a student is speaking derogatorily to another student? How could you model and demonstrate inclusivity?



# DC's Inclusive Learning Standards

*How to Incorporate Standards*



# Where LGBTQ+ Inclusivity Appears in DC Education Standards

- DC Menstrual Health Education Standards – NEW
- DC Social Studies Education Standards – NEW
- DC Health Education Standards

These standards are designed for specific subjects but can be used by any teacher to build out an inclusive curriculum.

# Why These Standards Are Important

- Guide curriculum development at the local education agency (LEA) and educator levels.
- Provide guidance to LEAs on developmentally appropriate learning and skills development.
- Offer specificity for inclusion in curriculum across the grades.
- Demonstrate DC government support for LGBTQ+ inclusion in schools and curriculum at all grade levels.

# Expanding Student Access to Period Products Act of 2022 (DC Law 24-92)

- DC Law 24-92, the “Expanding Student Access to Period Products Act of 2022,” was passed by Council and became effective March 15, 2022.
- The law has three primary requirements:
  - LEAs must install and maintain dispensers or similar receptacles of free-for-use period products in women's and gender-neutral bathrooms.
  - OSSE must develop a sign that includes medically accurate information on the safe use and disposal of menstrual products.
  - OSSE must develop health education standards on menstrual education for all students regardless of gender beginning in Grade 4.

*DC Law 24-92 § 38-531.01-02*

# DC Health Education Standards

- Revised in 2016
- Benchmark standards to guide health education
- Health promotion, accessing information, communication, healthy behaviors, advocacy, etc.
- Diverse family structures (grade 2)
- LGBTQ+ information and resources (by grades 8 and 12)
- Mental health and wellbeing standards across the grades.

[https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/2016%20Health%20Education%20Standards\\_0.pdf](https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/2016%20Health%20Education%20Standards_0.pdf)

# DC Social Studies Education Standards

- Revised in 2023!
- Benchmark standards to guide social studies curriculum
- Elementary standards include:
  - Diverse family structures and communities (kindergarten)
  - Influence of LGBTQ+ community on DC history (grade 1)
  - LGBTQ+ oppression during World War II (grade 5)
- High school standards advance LGBTQ+ experience in:
  - DC History
  - US History
  - World History

[www.osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page\\_content/attachments/Revisions%20to%20Standards%20%28July%202023%29.pdf](http://www.osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/Revisions%20to%20Standards%20%28July%202023%29.pdf)

# Think About ...

Have you used any of these three standards to guide your teaching?

How would you begin to use them in your practice?



# GSA and Extracurricular Activities

*How to Incorporate Standards*

## What is a GSA?

- Gender-Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) - **Student-run** organizations that connect LGBTQ+ youth and allies to build community and organize around issues impacting them.
- Middle and high school
- Some elementary schools have them too, focused more broadly on diversity and inclusion
- GSAs can be a club/space for:
  - Socializing and community building
  - Activism and awareness
  - Support and safety
- GSAs are student initiated and run, but advisor supported!

<https://gsanetwork.org/resources/10-steps-for-starting-a-gsa/>



## Why Have a GSA?

- GSAs are proven to improve school climate and inclusion for LGBTQ+ students.
- GSAs offer a space for community for LGBTQ+ students and allies.
- GSA members can experience greater feelings of school belonging, higher levels of self-esteem, and lower levels of depression.
- GSA members identify GSAs as a valuable places to:
  - learn about LGBTQ+ issues.
  - work with school's staff to improve inclusivity for LGBTQ+ students.
  - talk about their experiences with harassment and discrimination at school.

<https://www.glsen.org/gsa-study>

## Beyond the GSA

- National Activities for Organizing – activities that GSAs can organize on campus
  - LGBTQ+ History Month (October)
  - No-Name-Calling Week (January)
  - National Day of Reading (February)
  - Solidarity Week (November)
  - Day of Silence (April)
- GSA Network Youth Organizing Opportunities
- DC Public Schools' annual Leading With Pride conference for LGBTQ+ students across the DC region

<https://gsanetwork.org/support-youth-organizing/>

<https://www.glsen.org/our-work>

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/join-us-for-our-welcoming-schools-national-day-of-reading>



## Think About...

Have you participated in an LGBTQ+ event at your school?  
What would it take to support such an event?



# Inclusion Strategies

*Allyship in Action*

# Windows and Mirrors

- “Children need windows and mirrors. They need mirrors in which they see themselves and windows through which they see the world.” – Rudine Sims Bishop
- Windows allow students to see through another's perspective.
- Mirrors allow students to see themselves in the lesson.
- Glass doors allow students to step into and experience another world.

<https://scenicregional.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Mirrors-Windows-and-Sliding-Glass-Doors.pdf>

# Essential Components

- Inclusive Curriculum
  - Creates opportunities to identify gender stereotyping and limits in popular culture.
  - Teaches students how to be an ally and support each other.
  - Immediately interrupts hostile attitudes or references toward others if you observe them.

# Teaching Strategies

- Include inclusive texts, from a variety of authors and sources
- Use inclusive language
  - Example: “scholars” instead of “boys/girls”
- Avoid arbitrary gender segregation
  - In class (Health/PE)
  - During lunch
  - While lining up
- Social-emotional learning (SEL) practices
- Library resources

# Think About...

How could you develop inclusive strategies in the classroom and at school? How is your role set up to implement inclusive strategies for LGBTQ+ students?



## In Closing

- Explain the impact of inclusive curricula and extracurricular experiences.
- Select DC learning standards they can use to advance LGBTQ+ experiences in their curriculum.
- Prepare to help students create and sustain a GSA student club.
- Develop strategies to increase inclusivity in the classroom and at school.

# Questions For You

What did you learn today or anytime during these five sessions?

What questions do you still have?

What else do you want to learn?

What other resources do you need to support LGBTQ+ students?



Questions?

# Session Evaluation

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Thank you!

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